

THE HARVEY HOUSE
W. NANTICOKE, PENNSYLVANIA

H.A.B.S. No. Pa. 237

HABS
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40-NANTW,
1-

Reduced Copies of Measured Drawings

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA
District of Pennsylvania

Historic American Buildings Survey
Thomas H. Atherton, District Officer
97 South Franklin St., Wilkes-Barre, Pa.

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THE HARVEY HOUSE
West Nanticoke, Luzerne County, Pennsylvania

<u>Owner</u>	Glen Alden Coal Company.
<u>Date of Erection</u>	1832.
<u>Builder</u> (Owner)	Jameson Harvey.
<u>Present Condition</u>	Not too well preserved. Modern partitions have been placed separating house into two sections. Left side of building was built at a somewhat later date, possibly only several months or a year. Fireplaces are open. Doors and some of the flooring is original. Stairways and main front entrance is original.
<u>Number of Stories</u>	Two and one half.
<u>Materials of Construction</u>	Stone foundations. Exterior walls, frame and interior finish, walls and ceilings, plastered. Flooring is pine, random widths. Roof is constructed of wood shingles.

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THE HARVEY HOUSE
West Nanticoke, Luzerne County, Pennsylvania

Benjamin Harvey, first of the family of Harveys to migrate to the Valley of Wyoming, was the grandfather of Jameson Harvey who built the present Harvey House, came to Wyoming in 1772 and was admitted a proprietor in Plymouth Township and immediately began to erect a dwelling. He was also given a tract of land lying south west of Plymouth, by members of the Susquehanna Company in appreciation for services rendered. He began in 1773, to erect a saw mill and in 1774, began the erection of two log dwelling houses. He then disposed of his land in Plymouth Township and moved his family to the new houses, at West Nanticoke.

In December, 1780, Benjamin Harvey and his son, Elisha (father of Jameson) were taken prisoners, together with four others and marched toward Fort Niagara. They were detained there until late spring of 1781 when Benjamin was released on parole, by the military authorities at Fort Niagara, who evidently, were of the opinion that he was too aged to be kept a prisoner or to aid the cause of the rebels. It was on his trip homeward that Benjamin discovered "Harvey's Lake", which is the largest natural lake in Northeastern Pennsylvania. He arrived in Wilkes-Barre in July and he and his daughter returned to their home in Plymouth. He then began to build a new dwelling and a new saw mill on his "plantation below Shawney", and during the summer of 1782, journeyed on horse-back to Montreal, Canada for the purpose of bringing his son Elisha, home.

Finally, in 1784, the violence which had been heaped by the Pennamites, upon the residents of Wyoming, ceased and Mr. Harvey was able to conduct his saw mill, and began, early in 1785, the erection of a grist mill. At the time of his death in 1795, he was building another mill. All of these mills passed into the hands of his daughter, Lucy Harvey Tillbury.

Mr. Harvey died at his home in Plymouth Township near what is now West Nanticoke, November 27, 1795 in the seventy-fourth year of his age. Charles Miner says in his "History of Wyoming", "Benjamin Harvey was esteemed one of the most considerate, prudent men among those who first established themselves in the Valley. His name is on the earliest list in the Township of Plymouth.

He emigrated from Lyme, New London County, Connecticut, and was the intimate friend and frequently, the confidential adviser of Colonel Butler, they having formerly been neighbors. He was often employed in situations of trust and delicacy, and his opinions were regarded with marked respect."

Jameson Harvey was born near what is now West Nanticoke, Plymouth Township, Luzerne County, Pennsylvania on New Year's Day, 1796, the sixth child of Elisha and Rosanna Harvey. His father died when he was but little past four years of age, and he and his brothers and sisters were reared by their mother on the ancestral "plantation" in Plymouth Township.

In December, 1813, Joseph Jameson was appointed guardian of the latter's estate and in the following April when a division of the real estate of Elisha Harvey, deceased, was made, Mr. Jameson drew for his ward pourparty No. 2, containing 163.75 acres. This tract, which was almost triangular in shape lay nearly in the middle of the "plantation" and within its bounds were the old home of Benjamin Harvey and the "Flunket" rocks. A considerable portion was improved. Some years later Jameson purchased of his brother Silas, the latter's share of the ancestral estate consisting of 187 acres and was bounded on one side by Harvey's Creek and one side by the river. He determined to follow farming as an occupation and began early to improve his property. He cleared up a large quantity of new land on his property and raised good crops of cereals while upon some of the land, which had been the longest under cultivation, he planted fruit trees.

In 1832, Mr. Harvey erected at an almost central point on his property, on the hillside overlooking the Susquehanna, a substantial and commodious frame residence. This, in its day, was one of the finest and most attractive of the numerous country homes in the Valley of Wyoming. The house, as it is today, is sadly neglected and sunken from its former state. Having passed from the ownership of Jameson Harvey into the possession of a coal-mining company nearly sixty years ago, and been occupied since then, by various tenants who did not realize nor appreciate its true value, its present untidy and shabby appearance may readily be accounted for. To this house where he had been born, Jameson Harvey removed with his mother, shortly before Christmas, 1832, and a few days later he brought his wife, "Polly" Campbell, to whom he had been married in Hanover Township on December 28, 1832.

The existence of anthracite coal in what is now the township of Plymouth was well known to the early explorers and surveyors. It was also known, through a certain letter, that there was good coal on the "plantation property". It was not until 1808 that the mineral began to be esteemed of very

much value. Up to that year it had never been used for domestic purposes. No one supposed it would burn without the aid of an air blast. In February, 1808, Judge Jesse Fell of Wilkes-Barre discovered, as the result of an experiment, that "the common type stone coal of the Valley" could be burned in a stove and an open grate.

In 1827, Jameson Harvey discovered coal on his portion of the property and the next year began digging coal and sending it down the river to market. None of the appliances of modern mining were then known in the Valley. Coal was loosened by the aid of a pick, sledge-hammer and a wedge. About 1818, they began to blast down coal by the use of powder. Jameson Harvey carried on his mining operations for a number of years in accordance with the methods then prevailing in Wyoming; but as more ample and less expensive facilities were afforded for sending coal to market and the coal trade increased, new methods were adopted by Mr. Harvey. One of the earliest breakers erected in Plymouth Township was that of Jameson Harvey built about sixty rods from his residence.

For two or three years about 1834, Jameson Harvey, in addition to operating his own mine, was engaged in the coal business in Plymouth Township in partnership with his brothers-in-law George Lane and Thomas Fringle. In 1834, he opened, near his mine at West Nanticoke a store for the sale of general merchandise, which business he conducted for a number of years in connection with his coal business. A few years later, he engaged also in the manufacture of lumber, and this work he carried on quite extensively for some years, not only in Plymouth, but in other townships where he owned large timber tracts. During all these years he continued to oversee and direct the farming operations on his land near West Nanticoke.

In 1863, Mr. Harvey turned his mining business over to his sons, and during the next six years devoted all his time to lumber and farming interests in Plymouth, Lehman Townships and elsewhere. In February, 1871, Jameson Harvey sold to the Susquehanna Coal Company, for a large sum of money, his 350.75 acres of land at West Nanticoke together with all the buildings and mines thereon, his mining machinery, etc. Mr. Harvey continued to carry on there for about a year longer, his farming operations, while William J. and H.H. Harvey conducted their mercantile business at West Nanticoke during the same time.

Jameson Harvey and his family then moved to Wilkes-Barre; they resided first in a frame house on Franklin St., below South, belonging to W.J. and H.H. Harvey, and which had just been erected. In 1872, the brick residence just built by W.J. and H.H. Harvey, was turned over to Jameson Harvey and

his family. He lived there until his death at the age of eighty-nine.

Within a few years after purchasing the property the Susquehanna Coal Company demolished the old breaker and upon its site erected a larger and more modern one, which was known as Susquehanna Breaker #3. About 1897, this breaker was torn down by its owners, there being no further use for it, as all the coal had been removed from the workings in that immediate locality.

Because of his long life---all of which was spent in Luzerne County, his varied business relations with many people during many years, and the success which he achieved in the various enterprises with which he had been connected, Jameson Harvey was, in the latter years of his life, one of the best known men in the Valley of Wyoming. In his death, the last of the original coal operators, and the oldest native-born resident, of the Valley of Wyoming passed away.

The Harvey House was built in 1832 by Jameson Harvey. It is a very good example of Colonial architecture of the Georgian period. The house is built on field stone foundations about four feet in height; frame construction---exterior finish, wood siding, and interior finish, walls and ceilings, plastered. Roof is gabled on east and west elevations and is constructed of wood shingles.

The main entrance is Colonial in design with a decorated fan-shaped transom made of glass and wood strips. Door frames are fluted with plain caps. The door is panelled and has a high sill. Steps are plain, wide stone slabs. Entrance from the front porch is modern. The house has recently been divided into two separate parts by a partition next to the main stairway in the hall, on first and second floors. The original portion of the house is up to the porch on the right side, from the front. The other portion was added at a somewhat later date, probably only a few years after the main portion was completed. At one time, there was a lean-to or possibly, a summer kitchen toward the rear on the west elevation, with a passage leading from the kitchen. The lean-to has been removed and the passage closed.

Originally, there was but one back entrance. There are now three. The original door is very wide and panelled. The old box latch and hardware remain. There are four small panes of glass in the transom. All the original door frames are carved and fluted with square plain corner blocks. The front porch is small with two plain wooden columns supporting the second story.

Upon entering the house, we find a long wide hall which is now partitioned into two portions. The main stairway to the second floor is Colonial, very simple and easy. The balusters are spindle-type, the banisters and newels, plain. There is panelling under the stairway. Behind the stairway is another partition cutting off the rear portion of the hall. There is also a partition on both sides making this portion a small room, now used as storage space.

To the right of the original main hall, is the door leading to the living room. The original thumb latches are still in place on the door. There are two windows panelled below, facing front elevation and a similar window facing east. The fireplace is open. Face is stone. Hearth is slate. Back of fireplace is stone and bevelled. There are warming ovens decorated with brass knobs. These were removed from the kitchen fireplace. The stone lintel has an ornament similar to those on either side of framing. Mantel is wood with decorative center rosette. Door from living room leads to present kitchen. This was formerly the sitting room. The fireplace has plain wood mantel with decorative center and ornamented sides. The face and hearth are brick. There are built-in panelled cupboards. One window faces rear and one, east. Modern door to back porch.

The second floor in this original portion of the building has a long, narrow hall. Bed room at top of stairs, to the left is small. There is one window and one closet. Closet door has original hardware. There is a very small room next to this, probably used for storage. Here also, we have old thumb latches. Door to the right of the hall leads to large bed room with chair rail, as in hall. One window faces east, another faces rear. There is an open fireplace with wood mantel and framing. Mantel has carved plaque in center, brick hearth and face. This fireplace is covered by removable shield.

There is one window at far end of hall. Another bed room in this part of hall is quite large, with two windows facing front and one facing east. There is one closet. The original entrance to the attic has door with unusual type of hardware. There are four distinct types of ~~old~~ hardware on the various doors in this and the newer section of the house. One of these is modern. There is a chair rail in first and second floor halls and in living room and kitchen on first floor.

The newer portion or left side of the house has main entrance from small porch. This entrance leads into modern living room. There is a modern partition between it and kitchen. These two rooms were formerly one large kitchen. Fireplace is closed. A small room leading from kitchen

was probably used as bed room originally. This is now a dinette. Another small room off present living room was formerly storage room, now used as bed room. There is one window facing rear. There is also a small pantry with door leading to rear porch. Another door from kitchen is closed up. Door from present living room leads into former main hall. Entrance to cellar here. This is now enclosed by modern partitions.

The back stairway leads from kitchen. It is closed by door with the original hardware. The steps are narrow and lead to a very narrow hall. There is a large room at top of stairs facing rear. Original latches on door. Another large bed room faces front. There is a closed stairway to attic with original latches and brass knobs on door. The attic is exceptionally large and is not partitioned. Roof is pitched.

From front bedroom there is a door leading to adjoining bed room which is also large. There are two windows facing front and a closed-up door leading to original hall. Closet door has original hardware. There is a large storage closet in the hall in this section of the house.

Author

Approved

Date

Bettie Tol. Massengale
Thomas H. Atkinson
July 14, 1938

Historical information obtained from the following: Mrs. Ernest G. Smith, grand-daughter of Jameson Harvey., "The Harvey Book" by Oscar Jewell Harvey, A.M. (This is a book privately printed by the author, of which there are only two hundred and ten copies.)